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"Murngin" (Wulamba) Social Organization

RONALD M. BERNDT

London, England

121 IN RECENT years, the "Murngin" (Wulamba)¹ kinship system and social organization of northcentral and northeastern Arnhem Land, Northern Australia, have been the subject of much controversy and discussion among anthropologists: Warner (1930-31, 1937), followed by Lawrence and Murdock (1949), Radcliffe-Brown (1951, 1954), Lévi-Strauss (1949:216-46 *et seq.*; 1953:538-39, 543), and, recently, Leach (1951). In addition, various aspects have been discussed by Elkin (1933, 1950, 1953), Sharp (1934), Webb (1933), Berndt (1951), and Elkin, Berndt and Berndt (1950).

In this paper I do not intend to discuss this controversy, nor the Wulamba kinship system as such. These aspects will be treated in a more detailed paper to be published in the journal *Oceania*, in collaboration with Elkin. Here I will discuss specifically some significant features of this system of social organization, with particular reference to unilineal descent groups.²

114 On the whole, Radcliffe-Brown's (1951) criticism of Lawrence and Murdock's approach to Wulamba kinship was fully justified. He demonstrated that Warner's material was basically correct, while Lawrence and Murdock's argument rendered the whole system obscure and remote from real life. The material I worked through largely supports Radcliffe-Brown's contentions and agrees fundamentally with Warner's presentation. In addition, a number of further points are raised concerning structural implications, with most of which I am unable to deal here.

582 In the Wulamba asymmetrical system, based on marriage with a matri-
601 cross-cousin, the matrilineal and patrilineal descent lines may be diagrammed
611 in the manner adopted by Radcliffe-Brown (1951:46, Table III); see our
Table 1.³ Patrilineal descent is shown vertically, with patri-lines traced from
the F.F., M.M.B., M.F., F.M.B., respectively. "Matrilineal" descent is shown
diagonally. Five generation levels are associated with seven vertical columns.
These latter go in pairs. Column L-1 (to use Radcliffe-Brown's labeling) contains
persons who are related to EGO by relationships reciprocal to those in
which EGO stands to those in column R-1; the reciprocal of NGADI is
GOMINJAR, of GALWAI, WAGU, and so on. The same is the case with
L-2 and R-2, L-3 and R-3. These vertical columns signifying patri-lines of
descent can be indefinitely extended; but those shown here are the basic lines
significant to the Aborigines; and there must always be an uneven number of
such patri-lines. The diagonal columns signifying "matri-lines" of descent
correspond, in uneven numbers, with the patri-lines. The whole pattern, trans-
ferred from the kinship system itself, rests on the principle that (e.g.) males in
patri-line O find their spouses in the right-hand column, while females of patri-
line O find their spouses in the left-hand column.

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I. "BASIC" LINES OF DESCENT

The kinship system then is, as Radcliffe-Brown has mentioned (1951:48), based on three "basic" patri-lines, i.e., three classes of male relatives in the second ascending generation, the MARI, MARIMO and NGADI. M.M.B. is distinguished from F.F., but M.F. and F.M.B. are classed together. The inclusion of NGADIWALGUR, as a special variety of NGADI, gives a secondary patri-line. Radcliffe-Brown has discussed the "matri-lines" stemming from these, and has demonstrated that the existence of the term NGADIWALGUR with its reciprocal DUMUNGUR makes it necessary to have seven vertical columns. There are three basic patrilineal lines of descent and three basic "matrilineal" lines of descent: on this structural feature we agree with Radcliffe-Brown (1951:49). There are, however, certain differences: see Table 1. Although there are three basic patri-lines plus four secondary patri-lines; and three basic "matri-lines" plus four secondary "matri-lines," only one patri-line and one "matri-line" are of immediate importance to EGO. Patri-line O is significant to an EGO because through it he inherits his linguistic group (*mada*), and thus his clan (*mala*) position. The moiety too is patrilineal: through this line he inherits his ritual position in the sacred ceremonies, together with sections of the relevant mythology and songs, sacred emblems and poles, feathered strings, and sacred uterus dilly bag, his section of the linguistic group and clan totemic patterns. His ritual status is determined through his membership in this patri-line, which includes male siblings of his F., F.F., and male children of the latter. (The females of this line also inherit a ritual status, but I shall not discuss this here.)

This line is the important *buburn*, the male descent line — the sacred line through which a man prenatally receives his spirit, and into which when dead he merges as an ancestor. Magic too passes down this line, and all members of it are of the one moiety.

The "matri-line" (X in Table 1), cutting diagonally across the constant vertical "flow" of the patri-line, signifies a "submerged" line of descent. It is relevant to an EGO, but not to his father. It signifies too the importance of the line of his mother, who through her brother has been able to hand on to her son some of her acknowledged ritual status. She herself, because lacking in executive authority, cannot hand on such knowledge as she may have, but through the intense emotional siblings-of-opposite-sex bond (the strongest tabooed tie of all) she is able to delegate this duty to her brother, EGO's M.B. Consequently, EGO has a place in the patri-line of his M.B.; but this is actually of secondary importance, because his M.B. is of the opposite moiety.

But down this "matri-line" of EGO passes the knowledge and ritual status which skips a generation with the m. and M.B. and comes directly, so to speak, from EGO's M.M.B. to EGO himself, for these two are of the same moiety, i.e., from the M.M.B. to his Sr.D.S.

This is the important *maribula* line, of the same moiety as EGO's patri-line. To all intents and purposes it is identified with EGO's own line, and the rights and privileges which he inherits through it may be the same as those

[text continues on p. 87]

TABLE 1

582 601 611	Secondary "matri-line"	IKOMBOOR		Return to patri-line L-3
	Secondary "matri-line"	MAKATIVA		Return to patri-line 0
	Secondary "matri-line"	IKOMBOOR IKOMBOOR		Return to patri-line L-1
	F.F. secondary "matri-line"	IKOMBOOR IKOMBOOR IKOMBOOR IKOMBOOR		Return to patri-line L-2
	N.F. and F.M.B. basic "matri- line"	IKOMBOOR IKOMBOOR IKOMBOOR IKOMBOOR	L-3	Secondary patri-line
	MOO and N.M.B. basic "matri- line"	IKOMBOOR IKOMBOOR IKOMBOOR IKOMBOOR	L-3	Secondary patri-line
	N.B.S.; F.M.B.B. basic "matri- line"	IKOMBOOR IKOMBOOR IKOMBOOR IKOMBOOR	L-1	Secondary patri-line
		IKOMBOOR IKOMBOOR IKOMBOOR IKOMBOOR	0 (e)	Basic patri-line
		IKOMBOOR IKOMBOOR IKOMBOOR IKOMBOOR	0 (e)	Basic patri-line
		IKOMBOOR IKOMBOOR IKOMBOOR IKOMBOOR	0 (e)	Basic patri-line
		IKOMBOOR IKOMBOOR IKOMBOOR IKOMBOOR	0 (e)	Basic patri-line
		IKOMBOOR IKOMBOOR IKOMBOOR IKOMBOOR	0 (e)	Secondary patri-line
		IKOMBOOR IKOMBOOR IKOMBOOR IKOMBOOR	0 (e)	Return to patri-line L-3

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inherited through his own patri-line. The MARI and the MARIMO as cult leaders may be of the same patri-line and of the same linguistic group. They may belong to two parallel patri-lines, in a range of parallel patri-lines of the same linguistic group. Or they may belong to two separate patri-lines of two separate ranges of parallel patri-lines, of different (but closely allied) linguistic groups within the same clan.

There is evidence to show that so close is the identification of EGO's patri-line headed by the MARIMO, and the M.M.B.'s line headed by the MARI, that people do not talk of the *marimobula*, but always of the *maribula*. And if there is some genealogical difference between MARIMO and MARI, as there may well be, it is the *buburu* and *maribula*, the latter being at the apex. In ritual life, in the handing down of the most sacred poles and soul bags, in bestowing sacred patterns like an insignia of power upon the Initiate, in passing on relevant sections of sacred myth, religious dogmata, song cycles, "inside" words, invocations, personal names, magical power, and so on, the *maribula* is of equal, if not greater, importance than the *buburu*.

II. MATRILINEAL AND PATRILINEAL DESCENT

Now we, with Radcliffe-Brown, have called this the "matri-line" or the "line of matrilineal descent." There is, as we have seen, some measure of identification between MARI and MARIMO. Descent from the MARI runs diagonally from M.M.B. through the m. to her son; from the latter, whom we take as an EGO, through his sister's daughter to his Sr.D.S.: the *maribula* "flow" is linked through females who are siblings or mothers (m. and m.ar.) to EGO. Power and privilege received through the *maribula* do not go from MARI to Sr.S., but to the sr.d., who is the transmitter, to the MARI's Sr.D.S. The females, the MARI's sister, the M.B.'s sister, are agents in this transmission. Are we justified in calling this a "matri-line," or a "line of matrilineal descent"? Let us examine this more closely. Radcliffe-Brown's definition (1951:43) is unsatisfactory, and tells us nothing beyond the fact that a man is descended patrilineally, being followed by his son, and "matrilineally," being followed by his Sr.S. But in reality here a man is not followed by his Sr.S., but by his Sr.D.S. To view the diagonal lines of "matrilineal descent" in Radcliffe-Brown's way is to deny the significance of the *maribula* and the MARIMO-MARI identification.

A. *Formation of the Patri-Line.* Let us first consider the formation of the patri-line. If we modify Fort's definition of a lineage (1944:363:66; 1945:60) we are provided with a working framework. It is not a definition of a patri-line among the Wulamba, but it does help us to understand what we desire to show. Thus we can say that the patri-line spans a certain number of generation levels (in this case to the second ascending generation), and includes female siblings of the males of each generation level. But for the purpose of descent it is strictly agnatic and unilineal; females in this context do not, to any appreciable extent, inherit or transmit. Now this is the position of the *buburu* and the *maribula*, as with other lines of descent (all seven we have mentioned above, disallowing

611 any identification between those of the same moiety). But females serve as an agent or link in the transmission of rights and prestige (status and privilege), not through their patri-line, but through their matril-line. They are, so to speak, a channel through which this knowledge passes: knowledge from their M.F. which they have no right to hold themselves, but which comes to their male children. They serve as links, that is between EGO's m. and m.m., allowing EGO to receive this knowledge through the nominal head of his M.M.F.'s patri-line or *babaru*: this head is the M.M.B. This knowledge does not come through a man's M.B. There is no such link between EGO and his M.B., for the latter is too deeply involved with his own *babaru* and his *maribula*, which would be EGO's NGADIWALGUR's patri-line. This comes from a man to his d., and passes through her d. to the latter's son; but as the knowledge is in the hands of a man's son, upon his death it may be taken for all intents and purposes to pass from this custodian, via his sr. and sr.d., to his Sr.D.S.

B. *Three Forms of Descent.* Now, we may observe that we are dealing with three forms of descent as indicated in the structure of the Wutamba kinship. The first is the patri-line (or line of patrilineal descent); the second is EGO's mother's patri-line; and the third is the "line of inheritance" EGO's so-called "line of matrilineal descent." Each of these must be examined in order that we may know the nature of each, with a view to arriving at a definition.

C. *Line of Patrilineal Descent.* The line of patrilineal descent consists of all males and all females descended from a common forefather of the third ascending generation, in an unbroken male line. It is an agnatic descent group and strictly unilateral. The females belong to it in name, but lose their formal identity upon marriage outside the descent line. They serve as "agents" through which their male children may achieve some recognition (status) in the cult life of their M.B. Further, they serve as "links" through which their daughter's male children can gain recognition from their MARI.

The male members of this line of patrilineal descent are, in a manner of speaking, a descent group. We shall return to this aspect later. We may, however, say that all the male members of this line, as well as female members, belong to a patri-line. For our purpose here the "patri-line" and the "line" of patrilineal descent are to all intents and purposes one and the same. Moreover, this patri-line must not be viewed as a lineage, although we will discuss this, too, later.

1). *EGO's Matril-Line.* Now a man's mother's patri-line is of the same nature as the patri-line: strictly unilateral descent through males, traced to the third ascending generation, and including females who are siblings in each generation level. Females are agents or links, through which, on the one hand, their sons can obtain recognition in the cult life of their B., and, on the other, their d.'s sons gain recognition in their patri-line.

602 A man's patri-line is of one moiety, his mother's patri-line of the opposite
611 moiety. A man's association with the cult life of his mother's patri-line is of a
[616] "submerged" nature. Through his physiological connection with his mother, he must inevitably have some "rights" in her patri-line; but he can never as-

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sume a dominant rôle in any of its corporate activities. He can become initiated into its cult "mysteries," certain aspects can be revealed to him; but, however much he may know about these, he remains virtually an outsider. 602 611

A man's submerged association with the mother's line of descent may be viewed in terms of mutual aid. It is described in the following way. A man's bones are made from seminal fluid, his flesh from his mother's blood. A male of one moiety and a female of the other have combined in mutual "work" (i.e., *djama*, "work," sexual intercourse) and through their efforts formed the fetus. Because of his bones, the enduring part of his physical body, and because of the patri-ancestor who animated his fetus, a man may be acknowledged a member of his patri-line. But because his mother gave him his flesh, so to speak, he has some connection with her patri-line. Because he has only flesh from her, he cannot handle the sacred emblem poles of her patri-line. But his bones are really his father's *babarn* sacred poles; and because of this, and because of his ancestor's spirit, he attains full status in his father's patri-line. Because his mother co-operated with his father in bringing about his birth, because she added something to his physical being, he must always assist in the ceremonies of his mother's patri-line. When men perform on their sacred ground, those of the opposite moiety aid them in minor dancing, in singing, in calling invocations. But they may never handle the sacred emblems, never impersonate their ancestors; the cloak of spiritual sacredness may never descend upon them. A parallel with the Nuba may be drawn here (Nadel 1947: 213). 826 842

Within the mother's patri-line one finds relationships such as *momo*, NGADI, GAIWAL, *yandi*, GALEI, *galei*; intimacy with the females - with the *galei*, sexual intimacy, with the *yandi* and *momo*, freedom of expression, lack of constraint; formal constraint with the males, GALEI, NGADI and GAIWAL. There too, ideally speaking, are the M.Bros. of each generation of males of the patri-line. This is EGO's avunculine; its importance to EGO depends on the importance of the M.B. 602 611

E. MARI-GUDARA Line of Inheritance. The third line of descent is of a different nature; it signifies EGO's descent or inheritance through females to the third ascendant generation level, headed by a male, linking EGO with the patri-line of his m.m. This is not the "matrilinal descent line" spoken of by Radcliffe-Brown, when a man is followed by his Sr.S. Murdock (1949: 15, 44) and Herskovits (1949: 290), for example, have given us definitions relating to matrilineal descent. Do these conform with what we find among the Wulamba? First, we may observe that this "descent line" cutting diagonally across the structure of the system does not mean that EGO is assigned exclusively to that group (consisting of all females of that line and their male siblings): i.e., it does not assign a person to his mother's kin group. If the latter were inferred, this would mean that EGO would be affiliated with female and male members of both his mother's patri- and matri-lines. Now we may be prepared to say that by matrilineal descent we mean that a person belongs to his mother's "family," but that for purposes of inheritance and succession this is traced 611

611 through females to a named or presumed female ancestress, i.e., from S. to m., to m.m., and so on. To Radcliffe-Brown (1952:36) matrilineal succession means that "the greater part of the body of rights of an individual . . . are derived by him through his mother and cannot be transmitted to his children but devolve upon his sister's children." This is obviously what is meant by matrilineal descent: rights, power, privileges, etc., conferring, supplementing, or withholding membership in the group which forms the descent line, "flow" down through a man's female siblings and are held only for the span of their lifetimes by male children of these female siblings. In this way a privilege (e.g., may be held by a man who obtained it through his m., from her M.B.: the principle is inheritance and succession through a M.B. to Sr.S. But in our Wulamba structure, descent is different: the M.B. is not in the position to hand on any more than rights, privileges, and entree into the cult life of his own patri-line: he has, of course, as I have indicated, some affinity with the patri-line of his mother, but his main interests lie in his own patri-line and in that of his own MARI-GUDARA inheritance line. Within this context, then, the M.B. is of little importance and is not a factor for consideration.

602 When we say that an EGO traces descent back from his m. to his m.m. and back to a female ancestress, this is matrilineal descent, and females serve as agents in transmitting. In the Wulamba case, an EGO's m. and m.m. are agents who serve as connecting links (not being themselves transmitters). But what they serve to represent is not such a matrilineal sequence, for it is the patri-line of the m.m. which holds that which is to be transmitted. That is to say, the knowledge an EGO receives from his maternal grandparent, a male, belongs to his same moiety: it "skips" a generation, and also a moiety. It is really an oblique line of inheritance from the head of a person's m.m.'s patri-line, this head being his M.M.B., of the same moiety as himself and closely identified with (possibly one and the same as) the head of his own patri-line. We can call this the MARI-GUDARA line of inheritance. One of its principal functions is to strengthen patriliney.

III. DEFINITIONS

611 Thus we may state that patrilineal descent is a dominating factor in Wulamba society. The patri-line is reinforced by the MARI-GUDARA line of inheritance, while there is a "submerged" relationship between a person and his mother's kin, i.e., agnatically, because of the importance of the patri-line. But there is no acknowledged matrilineal descent, whether of a submerged nature or otherwise.

602 Thus a patri-line signifies descent through males to an acknowledged common progenitor in the second or third ascending generation levels, and includes male siblings of each generation level. These form the active members of the patri-line. The females of a patri-line are, nevertheless, closely bound to it: this is exemplified in the siblings-of-opposite-sex relationship. They serve as links between male members of their line and their daughter's sons.

EGO's matri-line is his mother's patri-line defined in this same way: a

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person's association with this line is of a "submerged" nature, and rests on the division of labor between his father and his mother which resulted in his conception. It involves acknowledgment of a maternal blood tie. 611

The MARI-GUDARA line of inheritance is from M.M.B.'s patri-line to EGO's patri-line. Just as the wives of the males of EGO's patri-line come from his m.'s patri-line, so the *mari*'s of the males of EGO's patri-line are found in his M.M.B.'s patri-line.

Now these three lines are the most important to a person: the *babaru*, *maribula*, and *yandibula* (including NGADD). They are looked upon as being connected to one another by close consanguineal ties.

The "affinal" patri-lines of importance to an EGO are the *wagubula* (containing his Sr.S. and his patri-cross-cousin) and the *yadivulgurabula* (containing his wife's MARI, and his own MARI's wife).

IV. NATURE OF DESCENT LINE

A. *Leach's Argument.* We must now turn to the problem of the nature of this descent line. But before doing so, we must consider some remarks made by Leach (1951:24, 29, 31, 34, 51, 53). It is his contention "that the corporate group of persons who have the decisive say in bringing about an arranged marriage is always a group of co-resident males representing, as a rule, three genealogical generations. . . ." Membership of such groups is defined by descent as well as residence. Thus his proposition is, "In a unilaterally defined descent system where a clan . . . ceases . . . to be a localized group, then, in general, it ceases to be a corporate unit for the purposes of arranging a marriage. The corporate group which does arrange a marriage is, in such circumstances, always a group of males who, beside being members of the same lineage or clan, share a common place of residence." These are local descent groups. Diagrammatic local descent groups are local lines; and the latter is distinguished from Radcliffe-Brown's descent line (1951:43). Descent lines, says Leach, have nothing to do with local grouping; the number of basic descent lines in a diagram relating to the kinship system depends upon how many different kinds of relative are recognized in the grandparents' generation. It has nothing to do with the number of local descent groups existing in the society. Failure to distinguish between these two notions has, says Leach, led to confusion. He says that "an important difference between these two is that the descent line comprises at least five generations; the local line considers three generations. . . ." 114 611 582

The problem before us is, then, to test this proposition and the usefulness of the concept "local descent group" or "local line." Leach considers that (e.g.) the type of cross-cousin marriage found among the Wulamba can usefully, for purposes of comparison, be treated as an institutional isolate. We agree with Leach's argument that the seven descent lines shown in Warner's work and by this paper are not actual segments of the total society. Lawrence and Murdock, as well as Lévi-Strauss, made this mistake and so inferred that the system was circular. We agree, then, with Radcliffe-Brown in insisting that [121]

114 they are descent lines. But at the same time, Radcliffe-Brown failed to make
611 clear just what is the degree of correspondence between these descent lines and
the local descent groups which constitute Wulamba society. Do we, however,
agree with Leach's explanation?

[616] Leach constructs a chart (1951:33, Fig. 7), which includes relatives genealogically related to EGO while he is a youth: i.e., those who are socially important to him as a young man. Warner's diagram is thus redrawn to show moiety arrangement. Leach calls the local descent groups CC, B, C, and CCC (see Table 1).

582 B, C, CC, and CCC are no longer descent lines but local descent groups:
601 B is allied to CC and balanced against C and CCC. B need not, but may, be
611 a part of CC. We may agree with Leach, who says that the MARI and
MARIMO cannot be the same person but they can be "clan" brothers. This
point has been noted above. The point in question is the "balance" between
wife-givers and wife-receivers. What compensation does a group give when receiving a wife? Leach discusses the status superiority of GALWAL in relation to EGO, and of MARI to GALWAL. The argument is thus: B and CC are allies and stand in balanced opposition to C and CCC; taken in pairs there is an exchange of women. In this manner, although the status difference between "wife-givers" and "wife-receivers" is admitted, the over-all system is represented as one of equilibrium. The economic and status relations are considered the most important theme to be derived from Warner's study.

Now, reorganizing a certain section of Warner's diagram, as Leach has done, does not resolve the problems which he raised. The re-assembling of terms actually adds nothing further than facilitating access to material already latent in Warner's diagram. It tells us nothing more than what Warner has already said. The same number of individuals are accounted for: B and CC, and C and CCC, both belong to different moieties. If B and CC are identified as "brother" groups, as C and CCC may be, then an "exchange" of wives is assumed. Thus we can say that the MARIMO (B) receives as his wife a *momo* (C); he does not give his own sister in exchange (so to speak) to his *momo's* brother NGADI, but his "clan" brother MARI (CC) gives his sister (*mari*) to the NGADI (C) and he is thus compensated; the MARI (CC) is compensated by receiving the sister of the NGADI's clan brother, NGADIWALGUR (CCC). Now, who gives the latter a wife? In Leach's diagram a "clan" sister of CC goes to him, thus placing the local groups CC and B at a disadvantage, at least for the time being. There is not really a balance between "wife-receivers" and "wife-givers," and the over-all system (as explained by Leach) is not one of equilibrium. For equilibrium to be attained, the NGADIWALGUR should receive a wife who is the MARIMO's sister, as compensation for having given his own sister to MARI (a "clan" brother of MARIMO) as wife. But NGADIWALGUR marries a "clan" sister (or actual sister) of MARI, while MARIMO's sister marries a GOMINJAR, who may be equated with a NGADI. But need there be absolute equilibrium? And if there is, need it be achieved in one generation, i.e., in the generation of EGO's grandparents? Leach's

analysis of this section of Warner's system omits consideration of EGO's sister's position, and does not take into account the compensatory factors involved in EGO's own marriage. To understand equilibrium (or for that matter disequilibrium) in a kinship system of this kind, to understand the ramification of compensatory factors, we must consider EGO as an adult, for it is his child-producing potentiality which is important.

B. *Asymmetrical Nature of System.* When an EGO marries, certain individuals become involved. For discussion we may diagram as in Table 2, on the basis of Leach.

That is, EGO receives a wife from C' group. His group B (i.e., all members of it), with his MARI group (principally his own MARI), i.e., CC, aid him in accumulating gifts which will be given to C' group. These gifts go principally

TABLE 2



into the hands of EGO's wife's father. A division is then made by this GALWAL, who gives presents to the group of his daughter's MARI (the NGADIWALGUR, CCC), who is incidentally his own W.M.B. and of the line of his own MARI; the remaining goods are distributed throughout the GALWAL's *babaru*.

When EGO's sister marries, certain individuals become involved: the same principle is involved here as above.

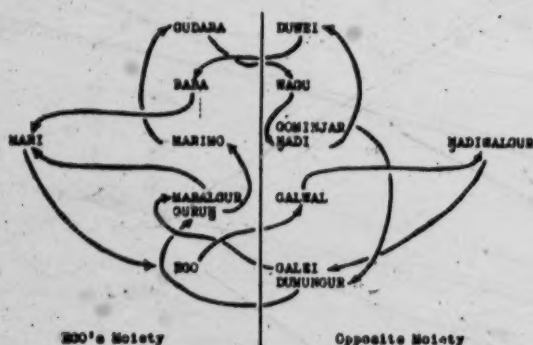
On a wider range, the compensatory factors involved can be diagrammed (see Table 3). As one may see by a glance at this diagram, the distribution of goods and services (in the form of reciprocal duties) between persons within the two moieties which contain the local groups is unequal. (I am not considering here the question of intangibles.) The only way in which they might be regarded as equal would be to classify all the groups of one moiety as against all the groups of the opposite moiety. Now this may be done in practice, so that any inequalities are wiped out.

What is, however, revealed by Table 3 is the chain of duties which links a man with his MARI, his obligations to his wife's F., and the latter's to his daughter's MARI. That is to say, the main principle, which is simple enough, and which governs the system, is that the MARI, as the most important of all EGO's relatives, because of the emotional bond existing between the two, because of his general identification with EGO's own patri-line, aids his grandson (his Sr.D.S.) upon his betrothal; but he does not aid his sr.d.d., for through her (EGO's sister) he receives his compensation. A M.B. receives compensation

583 on the marriage of his daughter, but part of this must always go to the latter's
 601 MARI. The key positions, then, are those of GALWAL and MARI—the
 611 M.B. and M.M.B.; they may be viewed by an EGO as positions of superior
 [602] status.

582 Table 3, however, demonstrates the asymmetrical nature of the kinship
 583 system. It will be noticed that those in the second ascending generation are
 601 receivers and givers (note incoming and outgoing arrows), but the MARI re-
 611 ceives more than he gives. This is counterbalanced by his sister's marriage
 with NGADIWALGUR, when the diagram begins to repeat itself in order to
 ensure a flow of goods from the outside—that is to say, to ensure that a
 "spread" or a coverage of a number of groups is made where marriages are

TABLE 3



concerned. There will not in reality be identification of groups within one moiety: it will necessarily be unstable (i.e., as Leach has observed, 1951:52, any system of balances will be unstable).

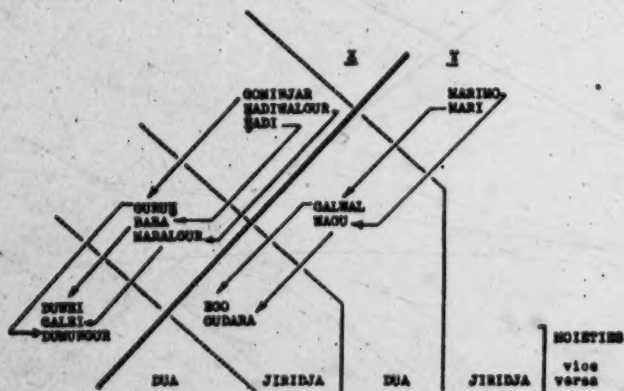
582 Or consider the same problem between wife-givers and wife-receivers
 601 (Table 4). Three groups are found on X side and two on Y side: EGO receives
 602 his wife from his GALWAL, who in turn receives his wife from his GALWAL,
 611 EGO's M.M.B. These symbolize the descent lines of inheritance discussed
 above. These X and Y lines are recurrent through the generations, i.e., the
 MARI (e.g.) receives his wife from his M.B. in the generation level above him.
 Seniority in status does not depend on a man's giving his d. to a male in the
 generation below; it is ascribed to him through seniority and position in his
 relevant generation level. A MARI will always have a higher status than a
 GALWAL, and the latter than an EGO. Such relationships are implicit, not
 only in the kinship situation, but throughout social life.

611 C. *Local Descent Group-Line versus Descent Line.* We may now return to
 612 the crux of our problem and examine the term "local descent group" or "local
 613 line," which Leach has used in preference to "descent line."

The "local lines" would be, according to Leach (1951:33), CC, B, C, CCC

(to use his symbols). Thus EGO's local descent group would contain himself, his father, and his F.F., and, one assumes, the male siblings of each of these. This group is said to be a corporate unit, sharing a common place of residence and being a part of some larger group which has ceased to function as a unit. This is an assumption, partly substantiated by Warner's data, and partly assumed from the composition of the lines of patrilineal descent (the patri-lines). Now, I would argue that the basic unit in Wulamba society is what I have termed the patri-line, and Radcliffe-Brown, "the line of patrilineal descent." This line (i.e., EGO's patri-line O or Leach's B) should contain at any one time MARIMO, BABA, WAWA, GADU, and MARAIDJA (including unmarried or widowed, or otherwise returned, *marimo*, *mugul'baba*, *jaba*, *gadu*, *maraidja*):

TABLE 4



and this will include male siblings of each of these, with their sons and S.S. The "narrow" patri-line refers to direct descent from actual father to actual son, and that is what is diagrammed. The patri-line as a corporate body must include male siblings, their sons and S.S. This is what is meant when we talk of the descent line, the patri-line of which an EGO is a member. It is not just a diagrammatic device. Further, it should not comprise only EGO, his F., and his F.F., as Leach has noted, but must and does contain relatives of the first and second ascending kinship grades as well as of the first and second descending kinship grades. Old men take young wives. EGO's F. has in a number of cases had several wives before EGO's birth, while when EGO is a small child he may have classificatory S. and S.S. who are his actual father's S.S. or F.S.S.S. by another mother, or his F.B.S.S. or F.B.S., and so on. Empirical material should form the basis of any diagrammatic construct.

Now the *patri-line* may be defined as above, containing males who are F., F.F., B., S., and S.S. to an EGO. They will be actual, as well as classificatory, male siblings or sons and S.S. of any of these. This is the agnatic unilineal

611 descent group which can be brought into focus by consideration of its corporate-
613 ness, its sense of common acting and belonging; its oneness as the *babaru*. I would prefer to call the members of this *babaru*, in totality, a *unilineal descent group* (e.g., Fortes, 1953:25) or *corporate descent group*. In its narrowest sense it is the direct line from F.F. to S.S., in its widest it incorporates male siblings of these persons, and female siblings of each generation grade who have not married outside. But the corporate descent group must exclude female siblings who are not coresident, for the term "corporate" suggests sufficiently close residence to enable more or less regular participation in organized group activities.

Now the patri-line suggests agnatic descent. Diagrammatically or otherwise we can speak of this collection of people as having each a definite position in such a *line*, but together they form the unilineal descent group and behave as a corporate unit. I do not consider that the use of the term "local line" in preference to "descent line" refines our definitions. But if we use descent line or patri-line to signify the type of descent, and to refer to an EGO's *immediate male* forebears and descendants, taking into account the depth of genealogical memory (in this case normally five generation levels, two above and two below), then it is a useful term. If we are to indicate the corporateness of the *babaru*, which will include male siblings and their S. and S.S., as well as unmarried female siblings of each of these, then we must use a descriptive term like "unilineal descent group" or "corporate descent group" or even Leach's "local descent group." The diagrammatization of this group may be designated the "local line," signifying its acknowledged totality.

D. *The Patri-Line (Descent Line): Corporate Descent Group*. Now the patri-line (descent line) is the minimal descent group. It is coresident with the maximal descent group, i.e., the totality of the acknowledged corporate descent group noted above.

611 All these male relatives (kin) with their wives occupy a specified tract of
613 country over which they have hunting and fishing rights. In this area reside
621 the spirits of their ancestors; in it are found their sacred sites and totemic centers, and to it belong their sacred designs and emblems. Excluding their wives they are the *corporate descent group*; including their wives, they are the *local horde*, the male-female co-operative hunting, fishing, and food-collecting unit.

613 E. *Parallel Descent Groups (Linguistic Group)*. But within this specified
614 territory are *parallel descent groups*. There may not be many of these, perhaps
621 no more than two or three or at the most half a dozen. But together they form
197 the *mada* or *linguistic group*.¹ Persons of the same generation level in these
[602] parallel descent groups are classificatory brothers, acknowledging a common ancestry, which may not always be genealogically traceable. They do not form a *clan* (*mala*), but together (as parallel descent groups) comprise one of several linguistic groups which make up the clan. Several *babaru* of varying size, then, in a parallel fashion, form the linguistic group.

613 F. *Minimal and Maximal Range of Babaru*. The *babaru* (the corporate descent group) tends to be the smallest unit outside EGO's direct descent line.

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Male siblings of any generation may segment with their descendants: this is particularly the case with male siblings of the second and third ascending generation levels. Actual relationship between members of these parallel groups tends to be somewhat vaguely conceived after the second generation, when use may be made of classificatory terminology considered to be more or less accurate. Each parallel group tends, too, to be more or less of the same size. The linguistic group signifying its maximal range is exogamous. Now, in my opinion the linguistic group could be treated as a lineage: but our labeling it a lineage would depend on our definition. 613 [601] [582]

It may be possible to view the *babarn* as the effective nuclear lineage, conforming with Fortes' definition (1949:9): thus each "segment" would be an effective nuclear lineage which in toto (and in parallel linkage) would form the wider lineage or linguistic group. But our definition of lineage would have to be made, not only in terms of genealogically traceable male relatives, but also by allowing some coverage of classificatory male relatives who are viewed as belonging to a common unilineal descent group—which is exactly what the linguistic group is.

G. *Nature of Linguistic Group and Clan.* Each descent group is the *babarn*: it forms the basis for the expanded family, spread across the parallel descent groups within the linguistic group. All male members of the *babarn* have a common interest and a sense of belonging to a common stretch of country, of sharing a common sacred background. The head of the *babarn* will be the MARIMO, and it is upon his decision (usually) that fights and feuds are begun, continued, and terminated: he is, more or less, the jural head of his group. As we have seen, several of such groups form the linguistic group, which means that such parallel groups not only occupy the same ground, hunt together, join in sacred ceremonies together, and so on, but also speak a common dialect which distinguishes them from other linguistic groups. As a linguistic group, these parallel descent groups have in common sacred emblems, songs, sections of mythology, and patterns or totemic designs. [621] [197]

Now, it is true that, as Leach has remarked (1951:25), "The number of basic descent lines in such a diagram [i.e., the kinship system set out diagrammatically] depends merely upon how many different kinds of relative are recognized in the grandfather's generation. It has nothing to do with the number of local descent groups existing in the society." But the classification of such a system into seven basic and secondary patri-lines that symbolize local descent groups is an indication that a categorization takes place. This categorization is an abstract, so to speak, of what actually occurs. It is nothing so rigid as seven "watertight" groups; but what is inferred is a scattering of consanguineal and affinal relatives, throughout a number of linguistic groups. It symbolizes range. 114 601 611 613

Within the parallel groups forming a linguistic group one finds all kin who are actual and classificatory F.F., F., S., and so on. One might also conceivably find a scattering of relatives who belong to the patri-line of one's MARI, assuming the close identification of MARI with MARIMO. But usually the 601 613 614

601 patri-line and hence the descent group, in its parallel extension, of the MARI
 613 would form a parallel linguistic group. That is to say, the MARI would belong
 614 to a corporate descent group, similar in structure to that in which we find
 EGO and his MARIMO, and several parallel groups of this substance would
 form the linguistic group, which would be parallel to the one in which we find
 EGO and his MARIMO and classificatory kin of his patri-line. These adjacent
 parallel linguistic groups, each of separate name, each claiming a separate dia-
 lect, we shall designate a *clan*, noting that each clan bears a separate name.

613 The linguistic group is loosely conceived as the political unit; and this may
 or may not include the descent group of the MARI. If the descent group of
 the MARI is outside an EGO's linguistic group, then the latter may be af-
 filiated with the MARI's linguistic group, and become the combined ritual
 body or political unit. The number of parallel linguistic units found in any one
 614 clan varies, from one to several (six or so). And it is highly probable that EGO's
maribula, which may be synonymous with the *gudarabula*, will be found here.

Now, the linguistic group, and the parallel linguistic groups forming the
 614 clan, are exogamous. For various reasons which we shall not discuss here,
 linguistic groups have, we may assume, grown unwieldy or been driven away
 from their home territories, and have thus settled elsewhere. Thus we find to-
 day that one linguistic group may be (e.g.) duplicated and scattered across
 eastern Arnhem Land; incorporated under another clan name, and parallel to
 other linguistic groups of different names. The whole area is divided among a
 number of clans of varying names, belonging to either of the two moieties, and
 containing linguistic groups which are often duplicated in other clans. But if
 613 EGO's *babarn* is found in one linguistic group and that linguistic group name
 614 is found in another part of the country, allocated to a different clan, a relation-
 ship is claimed as in the case of the parallel descent groups forming EGO's
 linguistic group. The same is the case with EGO's *maribula*, which may be
 found some considerable distance away from his own *babarn*. Similarly, the
 patri-lines which symbolize EGO's affinal descent groups of the opposite
 moiety may be adjacent to or some distance away from his *babarn* and *maribula*.
 In reality then, the patri-lines shown diagrammatically in the kinship
 system are scattered throughout eastern Arnhem Land, and are duplicated and
 reduplicated for the local descent groups, each being a corporate descent
 group. It is probably this situation which has given rise to the native classifica-
 tion of conventional intermarrying pairs of linguistic groups (this point will be
 discussed in another paper).

613 Some of the assumptions we have made regarding the distribution of
 linguistic groups, and their reduplication under different clans, need further
 discussion. This is not possible here, but must be considered in a separate
 study. Sufficient has been said to indicate that the basic social unit is the cor-
 porate descent group; and the linguistic unit under which this is classified, to-
 gether with the one which contains the *maribula*, form the other joint body of
 some solidarity. It is said that the *babarn* and *maribula* are expected to act as
 one in all corporate enterprises, and their "union" is expressed particularly on

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ritual occasions. Nevertheless, and notwithstanding their binding ritual and economic obligations, the descent group as such is the only unit to which one may turn to obtain aid which will be given more or less automatically. 613

As Leach has said (1951:53), "the network of kinship relations embraces a great number of local groups [corporate descent groups] and ties them into a kind of loosely knit political system; but throughout the population so linked there is no strong sense of social solidarity and in some cases there are even wide differences of language [as among the linguistic groups] and culture [not in this case, however] between different parts of the one system." That is to say, the usual characteristics of tribal organization are lacking, and it is for that reason that these people of eastern Arnhem Land belong to what I have called the Wulamba bloc, speaking a number of related dialects of one language which in toto are referred to as Miwoijj. 197 613 619 [84]

V. CONCLUSIONS

The Wulamba material carries a number of general theoretical implications. 114 These concern primarily, in this context, the corporate or unilineal descent group. The minimal propositions discussed by Leach (1951:52-53) mainly refer to the question of relationship between wife-givers and wife-receivers, and the differentiation of status. These arguments regarding the relevance of status concepts to the analysis of "bride-price" (i.e., bride-wealth) and dowry have not been followed up to any extent here. The status concepts which do exist in Wulamba social life, and are reflected in their kinship system, are those dependent on seniority and reinforced by ritual and sacred ceremony. Other factors linked with status considerations are the prestige attaching to fighting ability, to proficiency in magic, and to parenthood as such. Status derived from these sources need not coincide with ritual and ceremonial status, nor with status associated with seniority in a descent group or a linguistic group. Nevertheless, discussion of all these features would be relevant in any detailed study of kinship and social organization (see Sharp 1934:418-20). But status dependent on being a "wife-receiver" or "wife-giver" is to my mind not relevant. A man's status is not necessarily derived from or enhanced by his being a "wife-giver." It so happens that the "wife-giver" will be socially "superior" (although the term "superior" has connotations which I do not think are applicable here), but he is possessed of this status whether or not he accedes to the expectation that he will give his daughter to his Sr.S. I admit, however, with Leach, that a more detailed analysis is necessary of the economic aspects of the effects of matrilineal cross-cousin marriage. As he states (1951:45), "the reciprocities of kinship obligation are not merely symbols of alliance, they are also economic transactions, political transactions, charters to rights of domicile and land use." 583 584 606 [114] [582] [583]

Leach points out that when Kachin-type marriage (and presumably Wulamba marriage) occurs—i.e., matrilineal cross-cousin marriage—it is part of the political structure. Now this may certainly be the case among the Kachin, or among certain African groups, but is it the case among the Wulamba? Our 114

- 114 acceptance of this aspect will depend on our definition of political structure and its relevance in northeastern Arnhem Land. It is beyond our scope here to discuss this aspect in detail. If, as Radcliffe-Brown has said (1950:xiv), when we are dealing with political systems we are dealing with law on the one hand, and with war on the other, then for the Wulamba we must define what these two concepts mean. Or again, Radcliffe-Brown has shown that in seeking to define the political structure among the Australian Aborigines, we must consider the territorial community which is united by the rule of law. Is this political community among the Wulamba indeterminate? Thus in such a society the political structure concerns the grouping together of individuals within a territorial framework—a separation of group from group within the total system, which may be described in terms of war, feud, and the exercise of recognized authority in settling disputes, and so on. This would of course involve some differentiation of social rôle between persons and between classes of persons. As Radcliffe-Brown has pointed out (1950:xx, xxi), in an area such as the Wulamba, this would involve differentiation on the basis of sex and age and the noninstitutionalized recognition of leadership in ritual, in hunting, in warfare and in craft-specialization, and so on. We may say with Warner (1937) and Leach (1951:53), as I have already mentioned above, that a number of local groups (or corporate or unilineal descent groups) are tied together in a network of kinship, forming a loosely knit political system. For this means in effect that we have the minimal and maximal corporate descent groups, linking in parallel fashion to form a linguistic group, several of the latter forming a clan and all clans being linked in a cultural and social bloc which I have called the Wulamba. Nevertheless, there is no real political solidarity, as we understand it above, among the peoples so linked. There is, however, a loosely conceived political solidarity among those parallel descent groups forming the linguistic group. And that such groups are closely linked in kinship is obvious from what we have said. Many questions could be raised at this juncture concerning concepts of common action in feud and fighting and in the maintenance of law in this context. But again, without considering this in detail, we must say that the linguistic group does not act as one, however closely associated and intimately connected its members may be, scattered among the parallel descent groups, even though they occupy a common, acknowledged, territory and engage together in common ceremonies, belong to the one moiety, speak the one language (or dialect), possess the one sacred emblems and patterns, invocations, and so on. They are the common residential unit; but the political unit, if we may call it that, is the corporate unilineal descent group in its maximal span. A series (two, three, or more) of these political units in parallel fashion form the linguistic group: but political autonomy rests upon each of these units. At this juncture let me discuss briefly the function of such a corporate unilineal descent group. We have already mentioned some of its features, but now we must elaborate its corporate activities in order to justify its being termed a political unit, and to enable us to discuss it in relation to the generalizations indicated by Fortes (1953:24).
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This corporate unilineal descent group tends to be the smallest unit outside EGO's direct descent line, the composition of which I have mentioned above. This is the *babarn*. It is corporate—the body politic—because its male members will always act together, particularly in ritual observances: it may be distinguished from other linked *babarn*, forming the linguistic group, when such ceremonies are in progress. However closely linked these individual *babarn* may be, they are considered sectionally in one sense as separate entities. Each *babarn* is entitled to contribute its own sacred emblems (which may be of the same patterning as the other linked *babarn* within the linguistic group), and to modify and elaborate designs as it desires. Each *babarn*, among other things, will contribute sacred communal cycad nut "bread."

All male members of a *babarn* will engage in hunting together, but in this context they are the corporate group *plus*—and this plus will include their wives, so that they hunt as a local horde. But when they hunt for kangaroo, male members of the *babarn* hunt together and share as one: it is the same with fishing. They are the unit which will engage in feuds and in reprisals—brothers stand with brothers, fathers with sons, parallel cousins with parallel cousins, and so on. They are both the defensive and offensive unit. They can at times be allied with parallel *babarn* for this purpose; but when this is done payments are required, whereas within the unit no payment is considered necessary in cases of emergency.

In the settling of disputes—in what is known as the *magarada*, when the accused runs the gauntlet, his accusers throwing spears at him—it is the *babarn* as one which throws the spears, on the one hand, and, on the other, the *babarn* of the accused which reinforces him on the other side of the ground. Allied *babarn* will stand close by, but it is the single *babarn* which acts. The head of the individual *babarn* is also the jural head; he makes decisions and maintains order within the several domestic circles constituting the *babarn* and its adherents.

The *babarn* too occupies usually a particular stretch of country, but this may be ill-defined, as the linguistic group—the linked parallel *babarn*—is said to be the landholding unit. It does not own the land, but holds it in custody for past generations of ancestors and future generations. Land can never be alienated, sold, or occupied by another group. (This is an aspect which needs greater consideration.) When we say that the linguistic group occupies a certain territory, we are saying mainly that it is traditionally associated with this. It may not always be present on it. The several linked *babarn* may separate and, at certain seasons with wives of their male members, wander as local herds over the lands of other linguistic groups; but for their ceremonies, for their burials, and for a greater part of the year, they will be located in their relevant linguistic group, the boundaries of which are fairly clearly defined and are never questioned.

Considering these aspects, we feel justified in calling the unilineal descent group corporate. Moreover, this is the primary unit around which the Wulamba kinship system has been assembled.

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The point arises here as to whether corporate descent groups of a unilineal nature are common in Australia. They have not been discussed for elsewhere, and the issue remains for empirical investigation. I would suggest that they are present. Take, for example, the vague concept of horde, as a wandering food-collecting group. This consists normally of a small group of men bound together by common descent, plus their wives. Without the latter this is usually of composition similar to that of the unilineal descent group. A great deal has been written, too, of the local group: this material needs re-analysis, in light of some of the problems raised here.*

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We may now consider some of the general propositions relating to the structure of the unilineal descent group, and its place in the total social system, as put forward by Fortes. These aspects, he tells us, hold for both matrilineal and patrilineal groups.

Forde (1947) has discussed the emergence of such descent groups. It is assumed by him, and Lowie (1921), "that unilineal descent groups are not of significance among peoples who live in small groups, depend on a rudimentary technology, and have little durable property" (Fortes 1953:24). Now this is entirely relevant to our material and assumptions, for the descent group we discuss in this paper occurs among an Aboriginal Australian people who, we may assume, conform with the stipulations laid down for the nonsignificance of this group. If we find the unilineal descent group present in this particular situation, we may assume that we will find a strongly emphasized system of transmission of property rights and type of residence after marriage. In the former case, if we consider ritual, songs, invocations, emblems, patterns, and so on as inherited from father to son, with the oblique inheritance of the MARI-GUDARA line, reinforcing patriliney; and in the latter, the importance of patrilocal residence, with its implications relating to the spirit-conception center, these might well be significant reasons for their emergence. A poorly developed technology, and the virtual absence of durable property, are surely not critical factors governing emergence or nonemergence of such groups.

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Now I assume from Fortes' (1953:25), "the most important feature of unilineal descent groups in Africa [e.g.] . . . is their corporate organization," that he would regard a group of this kind as a lineage. But can we regard the corporate unilineal descent group discussed in this paper as a lineage? This question I have suggested in the main body of my discussion. I said that each *babarn* could be viewed as a segment, while the parallel linked *babarn*, in toto, could be viewed as an effective lineage. That is to say, we would be considering the linguistic group as the lineage, segmented into effective unilineal descent groups, each of a corporate nature. But this is not a particularly satisfactory position. The question thus arises whether perhaps we can acknowledge the existence of this corporate descent group without considering it a lineage. This, of course, would lead to a more rigid definition of a lineage, when its depth and span would have to be considered.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that for Fortes (1953:25-26) the unilineal corporate descent group is a lineage: "the way this works depends on the kind of

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legal institutions found in the society—and this is a function of political organization." The more we consider the question of lineage structure, the less we are willing to classify the corporate descent group of Wulamba type as a lineage. There are, however, striking similarities. For example, writes Fortes (1953:26), "where the lineage is found as a corporate group all the members of a lineage are to outsiders jurally equal and represent the lineage when they exercise legal and political rights and duties in relation to society at large." Thus among the Wulamba the corporate descent group, the *baburn*, will be viewed, in toto, by different outsiders as a *maribula*, a *yadjiwalgurabula*, *wagubula*, *yandibula*, *gudarabula*, and so on, depending on what type of relative is found there. "My mother comes from there," or "My sister's son comes from there" thus those people are "my *yandibula*" or "my *wagubula*." All the people within that group will be conveniently classified as "those of my *yandibula*" and so on: all are equally classed with "my mother" or "sister's son," as the case may be, although terminological differences between certain individuals within the group are recognized. But all are held responsible for the actions of any individual within. There is thus a collective responsibility in blood vengeance and in feud, or in running the gauntlet in a *magarada* "pence ceremony." This is thus a function of the Wulamba descent group, as well as, apparently, of the lineage (p. 26).

However, an aspect which demarcates the Wulamba descent group from the lineage is the latter's presumed perpetuity in time. Fortes (p. 27) discusses its continuity, which means its perpetual structural existence—the perpetuation of defined rights, duties, offices, social tasks, and so on, vested in the lineage as a corporate unit. Among the Wulamba, as we have seen, genealogical memory is short. The greatest span of any descent line is five to six generations. But segmentation occurs at any point, so that a number of parallel descent groups are ranged to form a linguistic group, and genealogical connections between them may not always be accurately stipulated. Nevertheless, within the range of the parallel descent groups we find the perpetuation of defined rights which will be primarily of a ritual order, and relating to rights over patterns and emblems, dances, songs, myth sections, and so on; also rights to hunt a particular natural species; rights to make certain kinds of bags; and, sometimes, but rarely, specified tasks like canoe-making, or prerogatives concerning stone-ax and stone-blade quarries, deposits of ochre, and so on. This again raises some interesting questions, highly relevant to our concept of lineage and descent group alike.

It is true, too, as Fortes has mentioned (p. 29) that the descent group must be studied as a part of the total social system. He considers that the main methodological contribution to such studies has been the approach from the angle of political organization (p. 30). Whether this can be done for the Wulamba descent groups remains to be seen. Or again, that descent is fundamentally a jural concept (Radcliffe-Brown 1952): we see, says Fortes (1953:30), "its significance, as the connecting link between the external, that is political and legal, aspect of what we have called unilineal descent groups,

114 and the internal or domestic aspects." In the latter context kinship carries
613 maximum weight; among the Wulamba there is more or less equal balance between these two features. The corporate body as such, among the Wulamba, is based on kinship.

As Fortes has pointed out (1953:31), when lineage structure is discussed it is considered "from a particular analytical angle, with the organization of jural, economic, and ritual activities." It is on this aspect that we require more detailed consideration in relation to the descent group among the Wulamba. This is the case, too, with the structure of authority mentioned by Fortes (p. 32), for a lineage as a corporate group. Each Wulamba descent group has an acknowledged head, an elder to whom all within his group look up. He, in conjunction with elders of other parallel groups forming the linguistic group, has special ritual duties and power; his authority is reinforced by ritual sanctions. It would seem, then, that a more detailed analysis of the significance of the descent group in Arnhem Land religious life would be a rewarding avenue of investigation.

121 In these last few paragraphs my purpose has been only to consider the cor-
613 porate unilineal descent group (as found among the Wulamba) in relation to what Fortes has termed the lineage. It (i.e., the unilineal descent group) is for him the basic determinant of lineage structure. If that is so, we can legitimately mention some of his broad generalizations in relation to our concept. Further, we have not deliberately tried to show that the descent group as present in northeastern Arnhem Land social structure is, or may be, equated with a lineage. But there are points of comparison between these two separate, but similar, concepts. These aspects of compatibility we have indicated, and they are propositions for further empirical testing.

NOTES

101 I have preferred the term used by the people themselves: they are the Wulamba, which
114 refers collectively to all their clans; that is, they may be said to be the Wulamba bloc. The varying dialects are collectively known as Miwoldj. Warner (1937) erroneously used the term "Murgin," which is the name of only one clan and should not be used in this sense.

114 The material presented here was obtained at Milngimbi in 1930; short periods of work had
122 previously been spent there, in 1946 and 1947. More intensive field work was carried out in 1946-47 within the vicinity of Yirrkalla, northeastern Arnhem Land. The initial period of research was carried out under the Australian National Research Council, the latter under the Research Committee of the University of Sydney; both were under the auspices of the Department of Anthropology, University of Sydney. The writer wishes to acknowledge the help and encouragement of Professor A. P. Elkin of that Department. This paper was written under a Nuffield Foundation Dominion Fellowship, in London. It was presented in part and discussed at a seminar on kinship theory at the London School of Economics.

114 The kinship terms used in this paper are in their Anglicised equivalents; these differ in some
601 cases from those used by Warner and Ralcliffe-Brown. For instance, *marimbo* is *marimo*; *yappo*, *jaba*; *maraliba*, *maraliba*; *maridja*, *maridja*; *maridja*, *maridja*; *lutera*, *lutera*; *gudura*, *gudura*; *mal*, *godi*; *gawel*, *gawel*; *aradi*, *gandi*; *galle*, *galle*; *dud*, *dud*; *maljwalter*, *maljwalter*; *haminjer*, *gaminjer*; etc. Terms in capitals denote males.

161 The approximate population of Arnhem Land is 4,000; 1,500 to 2,000 possibly belonging to the Wulamba bloc.

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* I would not say, however, that Thomson's material (1949) on ceremonial economic exchange fills many gaps, if any, in Warner's data (see Leach 1951:34). It is obvious, I think, both from his material and from ours, that exchanges of this nature between M.B. and Sr.S. comprise merely one element in a wide system of economic exchanges. Goods travel backwards and forwards through the network of cognatic relationships, against a background of linked and allied linguistic groups, in a traditionally prescribed fashion, between certain specified kin, passing outside the periphery of the Wulamba bloc into and from alien Aboriginal or European (or Indonesian, as before) channels. Such exchanges consist of specified objects or commodities, which move in different directions across the surface of the whole country; but this is only one aspect relevant to the total kinship system.

Also, I would agree with Leach (p. 52) that in a marriage exchange the equivalent of a woman is not only another woman, and that the equivalent of a woman may be found not only in goods and labor and symbolic objects. Certain intangibles can play a part - and these may involve prestige, rights, services, and perhaps status. Little work, as yet, has been done in consideration of these. Reciprocal exchanges between males and females, or between females, should also be discussed in much greater detail, for these are not just reflections of exchanges between male partners. It is not satisfactory to consider an EGO as being always a male, as has been done in most discussions of kinship systems. Where prestations occur between male and female kin, these seem to conform with traditional patterns; but between female kin (i.e., among the Wulamba), this is not so apparent.

* Radcliffe-Brown (1931:4-5) calls the local group a horde: he states that each horde is independent and autonomous, managing its own affairs and acting as a unit in its relations with other hordes (however, see pp. 28, 106). Elkin (1938:39-41, 73-74) discusses the local group: it is, he tells us, an enlarged family, consisting of a man and his living descendants in the male line; such a group can be a local patrilineal clan. Elkin then draws a distinction between the local group and the horde, which is as we have defined it above. In fact his statements would, I think, agree with our own here.

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